

# **RELGION DEMYSTIFIED**

**(Understanding Life's Mysteries in terms of  
Latest Scientific Findings)**

*By*

**Dr. Vemuri Ramesam**

**I-SERVE, HYDERABAD**

## **“Religion Demystified”**

(Understanding Life's Mysteries in terms of Latest Scientific Findings)

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**Picture on the cover:** *Naphthalene in Interstellar space. Spanish researchers detected naphthalene in the interstellar medium 700 light-years from the earth in September 2008. Naphthalene in combination with water, ammonia and ultraviolet radiation, produces many of the amino acids which are fundamental to the development of life. (Image: Courtesy Gabriel Pérez, reproduced with the kind permission of Director, Instituto de Astrofísica de Canarias).*

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## INTRODUCING THE BOOK

***Karmayogi, Founder President, The Mother's Service Society, Pondicherry 605011, India:*** "Our Rishis aimed at liberation (*moksha*) from the phenomenal world. Some of those eminent Rishis have come down to the mental plane and exercised their subtle vision that expanded into rare knowledge to found the 64 *sastras*. Sri Aurobindo has done to the world something the Rishis and Lord Krishna did not give. He has formulated a theory of creation, explained why the world was created and how. He has for the first time defined Spirit, Mind, Life, Matter, Infinity, Eternity, Time and Space. Sri Aurobindo wrote in 1920 that Indians had lost the capacity for thinking. Our future hope lies in our regaining it. Surely the centre of knowledge of the world will be India again. Dr. Vemuri Ramesam is the trail blazer. His ability to interpret modern knowledge in terms of the Indian spirit is unequalled."

***Prof. P. Gradinarov, Editor, Online Journals on Indology, Sofia 1336, Bulgaria:*** "....a perfectly composed book any thinking individual would like to have in her library to read and re-read. Thank you for the intellectual *ananda* your writings constantly induce in us, your faithful readers and hopefully impartial editors."

## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

One needs an exceptionally objective outlook devoid of any preconceptions and courage to abide by the conclusions arrived at through incisive logic for a true comprehension of the Doctrine of Advaita. Such an approach is possible only in spirituality and not in religion. The Vedic thought process, however, has been a conflation of both the streams of spirituality and religion. It did not decry the importance of either and prescribed steps to elevate religion to the level of spirituality. The inherent strength of such steps rests in unbiased scientific logic that underpins the Vedic religious rites and practices.

In any society, the gray haired elderly give advises and expect them to be obeyed as commandments while the black haired younger lot prefers to stick to their own logic. The mantra for today's youngsters is "modern science." Analysis of the old propositions using newer and newer logic has always been encouraged in the annals of Indian history. India always believed that truth, if it is really true, should be able to stand to the test of honest logic. That is why so many Darshanas and Sub Darshanas had emerged in Indian philosophy.

Dr. Vemuri Ramesam, the author of this book, is a perceptive scientist well versed in the method of science and has undoubtedly dispassionate analytical skills. If scientific logic solidifies and personifies, I am sure, it will take his shape. He examines with a fine comb in this short study the ancient Indian understanding about life and its mysteries. In 28 articles, Dr. Ramesam probes into many statements of Indian spirituality from the angle of latest findings in modern cosmology, advanced neurology, quantum physics, neurochemistry, medicine and many branches of modern science. It is, in fact, like a new Darshana - a "Scientific Darshana". The conclusions, however, in some instances, are not in line with traditional statements but it is noteworthy that the ultimate doctrine of Advaita emerges unsurpassed.

One of the objectives of our Institute of Scientific Research on Vedas (I-SERVE) is to reevaluate Indian Darshanas from modern scientific angle. I am confident to say that Dr. Ramesam has excelled in meeting this objective. His command on the technical terminology pertaining to modern sciences and ancient philosophy is something amazing. We thank him for the work he has done and we are sure that the world intelligentsia will appreciate Dr. Ramesam's efforts and travel forward in this new direction. I-SERVE is very happy to bring out this volume and looks forward to publish more of such works.

We sincerely hope that this thought provoking volume will trigger new thoughts and newer approaches in reaching the Ultimate Truth.

Hyderabad, India

Date: 24.11.2008

**K.V.Krishna Murthy**

Chairman, I-SERVE

# FOREWORD

Man is considered superior to all other living beings because of his ability to think, probe, understand, conceptualize, rationalize and communicate. While in the case of all other animals, it is the survival instinct that provides an impetus for their living, for human beings, it is the innate desire or need to know, understand and grow, more than survival, that gives a purpose to their lives and actions. The fact that man is a thinking and social animal has paved the way for the origin and growth of theosophy and philosophy.

Down the ages, we witnessed two different approaches to understanding life. While some people developed an inclination towards spirituality and mysticism for understanding the meaning and the phenomena of life, others depended on the technological and material development for characterizing and understanding the same. We can look at this as a subjective and objective mode of enquiry wherein the spiritualists would study and define matter and phenomena with respect to the intrinsic knower and experienter of all, which leads to better understanding of life and the spirit; whereas the materialists would approach the individual being with respect to the external objects and phenomena happening around, which in turn would lead to scientific advancement and improvement in living standards. Thus life has gone on, and will continue to do so.

Probably due to the above reason, we have grown up with the impression that science and spirituality are two opposite ends of the knowledge spectrum. While science deals with external phenomena as well as with the study of changes and reactions in the immediate surroundings, such as our world and the bodily functions that keep us alive, spirituality is the study of the inner self within man and the apparent truth behind the frame of reality that we live in. However divergent these two may seem, both streams of inferring knowledge ultimately lead to a common goal of human evolution.

Dr Vemuri Ramesam's attempt at bringing these apparently divergent streams together in the form of an expedition of integration between science and spirituality may not be the first of its kind, but it is a very informative and well written expedition which can provide us with a clear picture of the world around us. Its uniqueness lies in the clear and precise method of enquiry with which Dr Ramesam studies the various nuances

of our daily life to bring out the subtle synergies between the subject and the object as well as the spirit and matter. If we are to abandon all prospects of taking the world and its vagaries into consideration and constantly stay within the inner self, we risk losing and destroying all that has been slowly and tirelessly built up so far. And if we are to remain totally immersed in our affection towards this world and its dualities then we shall never be at peace, and never attain that mental beatitude enjoyed by all realized souls. While Advaita clearly defines the illusion of the external world, our body being very much a part of it, it is however impossible to completely ignore the world as such. It is here that this book and the essays contained herein come to our aid and clearly exonerate this doubt of ours.

These insightful essays, while keeping scientific facts and spiritual truths intact, dwell on the inter-exchange of key points between these two streams to substantiate the validity of each other, in a very thought-provoking manner. Dr. Ramesam's words force us to think beyond the set principles and ideologies as well as the conclusions we have derived so far and eventually prod the spirit of enquiry within us. He does not compel us to choose any one stream, but like a locomotive requiring two tracks for a successful journey, engages us as readers to keep a fast hold on both the rails of science and religion, for an integral evolution of our consciousness.

Dr. Ramesam deserves all compliments for his thorough research into the external phenomena that we readers normally overlook and take for granted, and for his study into the scriptures for a validation. I extend all my prayers and good wishes to him with the hopes that this collection of essays of his, which have graced the pages of many issues of our magazine *CONSECRATION*, will surely be a delightful and enlightening read for anybody interested in peering beneath the surface of our world and the apparent reality we live in.

Chennai  
Nov, 2008

**Suresh Menon**  
Managing Editor,  
Consecration

## **PREFACE**

*“When we consider what religion is for mankind, and what science is, it is no exaggeration to say that the future course of history depends upon the decision of this generation as to the relations between them.” — Alfred North Whitehead, Mathematician and philosopher.*

*“I agree with Whitehead’s assessment, but would add that in the main we have got the relations between science and religion badly wrong. What we need is a third way that can expose the core dimensions of science and religion, thereby leading to an appreciation of exactly where common ground can be found, and where the two rightly go their separate ways.”*

— Arthur Zajonc, Professor of Physics at Amherst College.

Many consider even today that Science and Spirituality symbolize two distinctly insulated turfs zealously guarded by respective protagonists. I am not presumptuous to claim special skills to build bridges across these contrasting views. The Essays that are put together here may, however, represent a small step towards looking at the “core dimensions of science and religion”, the third way suggested by Prof. A. Zajonc.

Whether it is science, spirituality or religion, the ultimate aim of Man is driven by the twin quests: (i) To discover what lies behind and beyond the facade of existence (call it “Truth”, if you like) and (ii) To find the means of achieving “A Happy Human Being at an Individual level and a Harmonious Society at large.” The essays here constitute more of a self-study in this direction. They may not provide final answers. Those who have similar interests as mine in exploring the world around us can use these to start their own journey. And possibly build on from here.



Thanks mainly to the encouragement from Dr. Plamen Gradinarov, Editor, Online Journals on Indology. I could present my views for the first time to a wider audience in 2004. I am indebted to Respected Shri Karmayogi, Founder President, The Mother's Service Society, India and Mr. S. Menon, Editor, for providing me an opportunity to contribute regularly to their journal, "Consecration." The present book is an updated and modified version of these articles.

My first article was Religion Demystified. A couple of later essays originated from it. In all my writings, I have attempted to present a review of where we stand in our scientific understanding of the world around us. I do not intend to prove nor do I wish to propagate any specific viewpoint.

The problem that Prof. David Chalmers holds 'hard' is, in my opinion, not unique to the studies on consciousness. Fundamental "Why?" questions remain HARD in any field. Questions like "What exactly is Life", Why Life, or Why Universe, Purpose of Evolution are a few other examples. Perhaps these questions cannot be satisfactorily answered in the near future. That gives a reason to revisit the thought processes of ancient seers and sages and know what they found. After all, the human brain and mind appear to have not essentially changed much in the last few millennia.

Even today we have a large number of so-called "Realized" persons who say they found the 'Truth.' The world perceived by us all is unreal for them. What exists for them is an unfragmented "Oneness", unborn and unending. This is the Advaita, Non-Duality view. All such 'realized' teachers, however, apparently still continue to experience the world; they do feel hungry and need to eat. When some kind or other of a dependency exists (e.g. on Food), is not a claim of 'freedom' or 'total independence' a contradiction of terms?

No organism can be alive without food. Necessity of food for existence of 'life' automatically implies the predator – prey survival struggles and tactics. Violence is sure to ensue in the acquisition of food. Exploitation and deceit by the aggressor and running for security and self-protection by the prey follow inevitably. Misery and grief for the victim are guaranteed. That is the very whole unpleasant game of "life" everyone wants to be free from!

Non-Dualism has not changed in the past, at least, 5,000 years. In the next 5 millennia too it may remain unchanged. However, Science is growing far beyond the limitations of Cartesian dichotomy and making inroads into aspects like Consciousness and 'self,' the traditional terrains of 'Religion'. Our understanding of the world and Nature in scientific terms in the coming centuries, leave millennia, can reach truly mind-boggling levels. Is "Non-Dualism" really something more than a eulogized and glorified "coping mechanism", a "survival tactic" discovered by a few in the past because they failed to conquer death? Can Science lead us to a better appreciation of Life and take us towards achieving "A Happy Individual and a Harmonious Society" and provide us methods of scaling up what is achieved by the "realized" few for mass application?

Curious educated adults with some general background in science will hopefully find the varied topics discussed here interesting and may appreciate what the present state of science is with respect to them.

I am obviously indebted to many individuals in the preparation of the articles and in bringing out this book. I am particularly grateful to Prof. P. Gradinarov, Respected Shri Karmayogi, Shri K.V. Krishna Murthy, Shri S. Menon for their kindness and encouragement. Mr. D. Waite was kind to introduce my writings at his excellent web site on Advaita. I acknowledge the cooperation of my wife, Smt. Vijayalakshmi too in my endeavor.

Hyderabad, India  
November 2008

**Vemuri Ramesam**

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